

Message Text

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61
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 NSC-05 /063 W
----- 076432

R 202244Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8577
INFO USMISSION NATO

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POUCHED TO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, CA
SUBJ: CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL DEXTRAZE IN SPEECH TO CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE ASSOCIATIONS, REVIEWED DEVELOPMENT OF CURRENT CANADIAN DEFENSE POLICY AND MENTIONED EXTENSIVE CUTS AND CLOSING OF BASES WHICH WILL HAVE TO OCCUR IF CANADA IS TO INCREASE ITS EFFICIENCY, PURCHASE NEW EQUIPMENT AND INCREASE ITS FORCES FROM 78,000 TO 79,500. WHILE SEEING NO PARTICULAR CHANGE IN THE NAVY, HE MENTIONED THE NEED FOR A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT BY THE MID-1980'S AND STRONGLY PRESSED FOR A NEW AIRBASE IN THE ARCTIC. THE ARMY WOULD HAVE TO ABSORB MOST CUTS ALTHOUGH THE CANADIAN FORCES ARE ALSO STUDYING PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES. CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO WILL REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. HIS REMARKS HAVE CAUSED RENEWED SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE CREDIBILITY OF CANADIAN FORCES.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON 16 JANUARY, CHIEF OF CANADIAN DEFENSE STAFF, GENERAL J.A. DEXTRAZE, ADDRESSED THE CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE ASSOCIATIONS IN OTTAWA AND DISCUSSED LATEST

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DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE. WHILE MOST

OF SPEECH REVIEWED CURRENT STATUS OF DEFENSE FORCES
AND PAST EVENTS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED
CURRENT POLICIES, HE ALSO MADE SEVERAL INTERESTING
COMMENTS ON MILITARY PLANS.

3. FINANCIAL PROSPECTS: GENERAL DEXTRAZE DESCRIBED
DEFENSE REVIEW WHICH IS STILL UNDERWAY AND UNDERLINED
INSTABILITY CAUSED BY INFLATION AND BUDGETARY RESTRAINT.
HE POINTED OUT THAT "THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
FINANCIAL PICTURE NOW IS MUCH IMPROVED" BUT POINTED OUT THAT
WHILE HE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT,
"THE INITIAL OUTLAY OF MONEY REQUIRED BY THE PURCHASE OF A NEW
LRPA AND TANK" MUST COME FROM THE NON-CAPITAL PART OF HIS
CURRENT BUDGET.

4. THIS MEANS THAT CONSIDERABLE COST CUTTING WILL
OCCUR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET. ONE OF THE MOST
LIKELY TARGETS WILL BE CANADIAN BASES IN CANADA; "I INTEND
TO RECOMMEND TO THE MINISTER THAT A NUMBER OF BASES BE EITHER
CLOSED OR REDUCED IN SIZE." IF THESE CUTS ARE EFFECTIVE,
GENERAL DEXTRAZE HOPES TO BE ABLE TO INCREASE THE TOTAL REGULAR
FORCES FROM 78,000 MEN TO PERHAPS 79,500.

5. GENERAL DEXTRAZE THEN DISCUSSED DIFFERENT COMPONENTS
OF CANADIAN MILITARY. REFERRING TO THE NAVY, HE SAID HE SAW
"NO MAJOR CHANGES" WHILE CANADA IS "DEVELOPING A TWENTY YEAR
SHIP REPLACEMENT PROGRAM". THE CANADIAN AIR FORCE WILL KEEP
ITS HEADQUARTERS IN WINNIPEG, WILL MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT LEVEL
IN AIRTRANSPORT, MAINTAIN AIR TO AIR TRAINING ACTIVITY AND WILL
MAINTAIN RADAR SURVEILLANCE AND FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR CAPABILITY.
WITH REFERENCE TO THE FIGHTERS, DEXTRAZE MENTIONED SPECIFIC
CANADIAN NEEDS FOR SUFFICIENT RANGE, COMBAT MANEUVERABILITY
AND WEAPONS PAYLOAD AND SAID THAT "THERE ARE NOW AIRCRAFT CAPABLE
OF MEETING THIS REQUIREMENT THAT ARE AVAILABLE NOW, THAT COULD
BE BOUGHT OFF THE SHELF, AND FOR WHICH PRODUCTION SHARING
ARRANGEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED.....LOOK AT THE F14, F15, OR
THE F16."

6. AT THIS POINT, GENERAL DEXTRAZE STRESSED HIS
DESIRE FOR A DISPERAL BASE FOR AIRCRAFT IN THE ARCTIC ABOVE THE
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60TH PARALLELS" "AS EACH DAY PASSES I SEE AN INCREASING NEED FOR
AN ARCTIC BASE, NOT SIMPLY TO SUPPORT THE FIGHTER, BUT PRI-
MARILY TO OPEN THE NORTH BY PROVIDING BOTH THE INFRA-STRUCTURE
TO ATTRACT COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND TO ALLOW THE PHYSICAL
PRESENCE ON THE GROUND THROUGH WHICH OUR SOVEREIGNTY MAY BE
VISIBLY EXERCISED. I SEE THIS BASE BEING DEVELOPED UNDER A
FEDERAL UMBRELLA AND JOINTLY FINANCED AND ADMINISTERED BY ALL
FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS WITH ACTIVE NORTHERN INTERESTS. IT WOULD

HAVE TO BE CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING JET POWERED AIRCRAFT YEAR
ROUND AS WELL AS PROVIDING HARBOR FACILITIES..."

7. THE CANADIAN ARMY: THE ARMY WOULD BE MOST AFFECTED BY COST CUTTING, SINCE "IT COULD BE BETTER BALANCED GEOGRAPHICALLY AND BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE TO FILL CRITICAL VACANCIES." HE THEN DISCUSSED VARIOUS HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS TRANSFERRING DIFFERENT BRIGADES OR COMBAT GROUPS FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER.

8. NATO: AFTER COMMENTING THAT DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS STAFF WOULD BE REDUCED BY 10 PERCENT, THE GENERAL TURNED TO NATO WHERE HE INDICATED CANADA "LIKE OTHER NATO NATIONS" HOPES TO KEEP THE CF104 OPERATIONAL UNTIL THE EARLY OR MID-1980'S WHILE STUDYING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. "ULTIMATELY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY OF THE CF-104, THE CF-101, AND THE CF-5 REPLACED BY A SINGLE NEW FIGHTER... I ANTICIPATE IT WILL COST OVER A BILLION DOLLARS." TURNING TO THE NATO BRIGADE, HE PRAISED THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE TROOPS AND SAID "...SUFFICIENT TANKS, GUNS, VEHICLES AND WEAPONS WOULD BE PREPOSITIONED WITH THE BRIGADE TO BRING ITS EQUIPMENT ESTABLISHMENT..." UP TO STRENGTH. HIS AIM: 2 INFANTRY BATTALIONS OF 4 COMPANIES EACH (PLUS THIRD UNCHANGED IN CANADA EARMARKED FOR NATO); 1 ARMORED REGIMENT OF 3 TANK SQUADRONS; 1 ARTILLERY REGIMENT WITH 3 BATTERIES OF 8 GUNS EACH; 1 COMBAT ENGINEER SQUADRON WITH THREE FIELD TROOPS.

9. PEACEKEEPING: GENERAL DEXTRAZE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE PEACEKEEPING FORCES ARE SERVING WITH DISTINCTION, "IT SHOULD ALSO BE RECOGNIZED THAT MAINTAINING OUR UN COMMITMENTS CREATS A CONSIDERABLE STRAIN ON OUR PERSONNEL RESOURCES...WE HOPE TO HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE...ON HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEM."

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10 GENERAL DEXTRAZE CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS BY REFERRING TO THE CANADIAN RESERVES AND HIS "AIM TO INTEGRATE OUR RESERVISTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITH OUR REGULAR FORCES.

11. COMMENT: WHILE GENERAL DEXTRAZE OBVIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO PUT BEST LIGHT ON STATUS OF CANADIAN DEFENSE FORCES, IT IS ALSO OBVIOUS THAT CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE REMAINS RELATIVELY PRECARIOUS. SOUTHAM COLUMNIST, CHARLES LYNCH, PERHAPS BEST SUMMARIZED SKEPTICISM IN JANUARY 17 COLUMN ENTITLED, "FORCES REALLY THIN". AFTER POINTING OUT THAT "DEFENSE, LIKE POLITICS, IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE" HE SAYS, "THE TROUBLE IS IT DOESN'T RESULT IN A CREDIBLE DEFENSE POSTURE BECAUSE IT DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHAT A POTENTIAL ENEMY MAY BE DOING". HE POINTS OUT THE RAPIDLT EXPANDING MILITARY BUDGET OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CONCLUDES THAT CANADA'S DEFENSE POSTURE CANNOT BE "CREDIBLE

TO THE SOVIETS". LYNCH CONCLUDES THAT "DEXTRAZE KNOWS THAT HIS FORCES ARE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT.....IN THE MIDST OF THIS MAGIC ACT IN WHICH HE IS COMPELLED TO FOOL HIMSELF AND EVERY-BODY ELSE - EXCEPTING OUR ALLIES AND THE SOVIETS - HE HAS THROWN AT HIM THE JOB FOR PROVIDING SECURITY FORCES FOR THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS....DEXTRAZE....IS TELLING US THAT HE CANNOT AFFORD TO EXERCISE HIS TROOPS ADEQUATELY NOR CAN HE ARM AND FUEL THEIR WEAPONS AND MACHINES."

12. FULL TEST BEING POUCED EUR/CAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, MILITARY PLANS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OTTAWA00238
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760023-0729
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760139/aaaabido.tel
Line Count: 180
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006